

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2789

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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TAGS: PINS: SF

SUBJECT: INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS MEETING ON SCHLEBUSCH
COMMISSION TESTIMONY ISSUE.

REF: A) JOHANNESBURG 215; B) JOHANNESBURG 239;
C) CAPE TOWN 193

1. ON MAY 16 TOP- LEVEL COUNCIL OF INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (IRR) WILL HOLD SPECIAL MEETING IN JOHANNESBURG TO REVIEW MATTER OF INSTITUTE' S POSITION ON TESTIFYING BEFORE SCHLEBUSCH COMMISSION. THIS SESSION CONVENED AS RESULT OF PRESSURE FROM GROUP WHICH OPPOSES MARCH 15 DECISION OF IRR EXECUTIVE (JOHANNESBURG 215) THAT INSTITUTE, WHILE RESPECTING RIGHT OF OFFICIALS AND STAFF NOT TO APPEAR BEFORE SCHLEBUSCH COMMISSION, WOULD AS AN ORGANIZATION NOT REFUSE TO GIVE EVIDENCE BEFORE COMMISSION IF CALLED ON TO DO SO. AT MARCH 21 MEETING OF IRR' S SOUTHERN TRANSVAAL COMMITTEE THESE ELEMENTS (MOSTLY NUSAS MEMBERS AND UNIVERSITY LECTURERS) PASSED RESOLUTION CALLING ON INSTITUTE TO REVERSE ITS POSITION AND INSTEAD TO REFUSE TO

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COOPERATE VOLUNTARILY WITH COMMISSION WHILE RESPECTING RIGHT OF THOSE WHO FELT THEY SHOULD GIVE EVIDENCE.

2. ISSUE HAS PRECIPITATED DEEP, SERIOUS SPLIT IN INSTITUTE AND WITHIN COUNTRY'S LIBERAL COMMUNITY, WHICH HAS BEEN REFLECTED IN NUMBER OF PRESS ARTICLES AND WILL DOMINATE MAY 16 MEETING. RANGED AGAINST EACH OTHER ARE OLDER ELEMENTS WHOSE MAIN OBJECTIVE IS TO PRESERVE IRR AND CONTINUE THE WORK IT HAS DONE IN RESEARCH, PUBLICATION, SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS, AND PROMOTION OF INTER-RACIAL CONTACT, AND THEREFORE WISH TO ESCHEW A MORE ACTIVIST ROLE, AND ON OTHER SIDE MILITANT, GENERALLY YOUNGER GROUP WHO BELIEVE TIME HAS COME TO MAKE STAND AND STOP COMPROMISING WITH EVIL AND IS PREPARED TO SACRIFICE INSTITUTE IN PROCESS. SPOKESMEN OF LATTER GROUP TALK OF NEED TO MOVE FROM CLASSIC LIBERALISM TO RADICAL, ACTIVIST LIBERALISM. THEY ALSO QUESTION VALIDITY OF OLD-STYLE MULTI-RACIALISM IN VIEW OF RISE OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS AND BLACK SEPARATISM, WHILE OLDER INSTITUTE FIGURES ARGUE THAT FOR IT TO HAVE ANY PART IN ACCELERATION OF RACIAL POLARIZATION WOULD BE CONTRARY TO ITS BASIC PURPOSE OF BRINGING RACES TOGETHER.

3. ACCORDING TO IRR DIRECTOR FRED VAN WYK, MAY 16 COUNCIL MEETING COULD BE TOUCH-AND-GO AFFAIR. GREAT MAJORITY OF INSTITUTE'S TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF CLOSE TO 4,500 ARE BASICALLY CONSERVATIVELY INCLINED AND UNDOUBTEDLY SUPPORT MAY 15 DECISION OF GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE. HOWEVER, INSTITUTE'S CONSTITUTION DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR POLL OF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP. 300-MEMBER POLICY-MAKING COUNCIL IS COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF AFFILIATED BODIES INCLUDING MUNICIPALITIES AND UNIVERSITIES. MANY OF LATTER HAVE STATED THAT THEY REGARD ISSUE AS INTERNAL MATTER AND DO NOT INTEND TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES. "RADICAL LIBERAL" GROUP, ON OTHER HAND, IS WELL ORGANIZED AND WILL BE FULLY REPRESENTED. ABOUT 100 COUNCIL MEMBERS, MORE THAN QUORUM, EXPECTED TO ATTEND.

4. VAN WYK DEEPLY CONCERNED AT LIKELY RESULTS IF MILITANT ACTIVISTS SUCCEED IN PUSHING THROUGH NEW RESOLUTION COMMITTING INSTITUTE TO TESTIFY. IRR LAWYERS HAVE STATED THIS MIGHT LEAD TO CANCELLATION OF BODY'S STATUS AS TAX-EXEMPT BODY WHICH, IN TURN, WOULD CERTAINLY MEAN DRASTIC CUT IN DONATIONS AND POSSIBLE END OF SUPPORT BY IMPORTANT OVERSEAS BACKERS LIKE FORD FOUNDATION. WHATEVER OUTCOME IS, THERE IS SERIOUS DANGER THAT MEETING WILL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PUSH EXISTING SPLIT IN INSTITUTE TO OPEN FINAL RUPTURE REQUIRING RECONSTITUTION OF ORGANIZATION TO PERMIT CONTINUANCE OF ITS WORK. WHILE COMPROMISE RESOLUTION MAY BE AGREED ON, FOR EXAMPLE NOT COMMITTING INSTITUTE AS ORGANIZATION ONE WAY OR OTHER, THIS WOULD MEAN ONLY TEMPORARY, UNEASY PAPERING-OVER OF RIFT. DECONTROL FOLLOWING JUNE 30, 1973. LUTKINS

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